



Breastfeeding
Committee
for Saskatchewan

www.thebcs.ca

Important:

- Finger feeding with a feeding tube is usually a **temporary** way to feed a baby
- In hospital, use a clean feeding tube and syringe every 24 hours.
- At home, check feeding tube before each use. Use a clean feeding tube and syringe every 3-4 days.
- There are professional devices available-check with your local pharmacy.

The first milk choice is your own expressed breast milk. If artificial baby milk (formula) is used discuss the possible health risks with your health care provider.

Stay in touch with your appropriate healthcare provider if you are breastfeeding with a feeding tube.

Finger Feeding Your Baby with a Feeding Tube

This method of feeding should be used only after instruction by a qualified caregiver.

A feeding tube is used:

- As a method of feeding when a mother is not able to breastfeed her baby or baby is unable to latch
- To teach baby a better tongue position used for breastfeeding.

Getting Ready

- Make sure your nails are short and clean, especially on the finger you will use to finger feed. (usually the index finger)
- Wash your hands
- Gather the supplies:
 - expressed breast milk or formula at room temperature
 - 15" or longer #5 French feeding tube
 - 12 ml syringe or container
 - tape
 - syringe to clean feeding tube

Preparing the Feeding Tube with Syringe

- Hold the tip of the syringe in the milk
- Pull back on the plunger to fill the syringe with milk
- Remove any air from the syringe by:
 - pointing the tip of the syringe upward
 - pulling back on the plunger to draw milk from the tip
 - pushing the plunger upwards until the air is pushed out and milk fills the end of the tip of the syringe
- Attach the syringe to the large end of the feeding tube
- Push milk through the feeding tube to fill it with milk
- Tape or hold the end of the feeding tube onto the end of your fingertip



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For further information contact:

Local Public Health Nurse

International Board Certified
Lactation Consultant (IBCLC)

Local breastfeeding support
Group

Saskatchewan HealthLine 811

References:

Genna, C. (2008). *Supporting sucking skills in breastfeeding infants*. Sudbury, Mass.: Jones and Bartlett.

Mohrbacher, N., & Stock, J. (1997). *The breastfeeding answer book (Rev. ed.)*. Schaumburg, Ill.: La Leche League International.

Newman, J., & Pitman, T. (2014). *Dr. Jack Newman's guide to breastfeeding (Rev. & updated ed.)*. Toronto: HarperCollins.

Feeding the Baby:

Syringe Method:

- Hold your baby in your arms, upright, in a semi-sitting position on your lap.
- Touch your baby's lip with your finger to encourage baby to open mouth wide like a yawn.
- Slide your finger into baby's mouth, resting the nail bed on the baby's tongue. The pad of your finger should rest where the hard and soft palate join the roof of the mouth, about 4cm into the baby's mouth. Gently massage the roof of the baby's mouth to start baby sucking. You may also try gently tickling the baby's feet/hands.
- After baby sucks 3-4 times, press gently on the syringe plunger. When the baby stops sucking, stop pressing the plunger. **Do Not** press the plunger faster than baby can easily suck and swallow. **Do Not** press hard if the syringe sticks. This may force too much milk into baby's mouth and he/she may choke.
- Burp the baby after each syringe of milk.
- Record the time your baby was fed and the amount taken.

Container Method:

- Rather than the syringe, you can place the large end of the feeding tube in the container below the level of the milk. Baby will draw the milk with suckling.

Cleaning the Feeding Tube

In the Hospital:

- Use a clean feeding tube and syringe every 24 hours

At Home:

- Take the syringe apart
- Wash (**do not boil**) the tube and syringe with hot, soapy water (mild liquid hand soap)
- Use the syringe with hot water to rinse the inside of the tube by attaching the tube to syringe
- Push air through the tube with syringe and hang to dry
- Rinse syringe well and place on a clean dry cloth and allow to air dry
- Store the tube and syringe in a clean container
- Use a clean feeding tube and syringe every 3-4 days